

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

REPORT ON H. RES. 68, REQUESTING THE PRESIDENT TO TRANSMIT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DOCUMENTS RELATING TO IRAQ'S DECLARATION ON ITS WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, from the Committee on International Relations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-38) on the resolution (H. Res. 68) requesting the President to transmit to the House of Representatives not later than 14 days after the date of the adoption of this resolution documents in the President's possession relating to Iraq's declaration on its weapons of mass destruction that was provided to the United Nations on December 7, 2002, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMPELLING CASE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, last night the President laid out a compelling case for immediate action against Saddam Hussein. After 12 years of denial and deception, trust in his sanity and in his restraint is not an option. The President addressed not only the American people but the Iraqi people, not only our military but its military. And he made it clear that our problem is not with the Iraqi people, that we do not want to harm the Iraqi people, that we will help the Iraqi people rebuild their great country.

Our problem is with Saddam Hussein. He has chosen this moment. He chose to deny and deceive the international community for 12 years. He chose to use chemical and biological weapons on his own people, and he chose to engage in mass murder. Now he has one last choice: go into exile or be removed and disarmed by force. If he chooses force, America and other free nations must forcibly remove him, his murderous regime and his arsenal. Our military will take great care to spare the lives of innocent Iraqis. My hope and prayer is that the Iraqi dictator will take action to do the same.

POLITICS-AS-USUAL MUST NOT HIJACK AMBER BILL

(Mr. FROST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to protecting our children, this House should never allow politics as usual to stand in the way of action. The House Republican leadership could allow Members to vote today to send legislation strengthening America's Amber Alert to the President. It is time to stop playing politics on this issue. So in a moment I will request unanimous consent to immediately take up the Amber bill in the House. This is the exact same legislation that passed the Senate earlier this year.

Five children have already been rescued with the aid of the Amber Alert in March alone. By passing the Amber bill, we can make this lifesaving program even more effective, but that will only happen soon if we listen to people like Ed Smart and others and stop allowing politics to hijack the Amber bill.

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF S. 121, THE NATIONAL AMBER ALERT NETWORK ACT ON TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2003

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that as the first order of business on Tuesday, March 18, it shall be in order without intervention of any point of order to consider in the House S. 121, the National Amber Alert Network Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). The gentleman has not been recognized for that purpose. The gentleman may proceed with his 1-minute speech under the Speaker's guidelines.

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I regret the ruling of the Chair. House Republican leaders have prevented us from voting on the Amber bill for over 6 months now and counting. This issue should not be treated like just another horse trade with the Senate. I implore the leaders of this House to let us do the right thing for our children and send the Amber bill to the President this week.

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S THREAT MUST BE DEALT WITH

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the debate about Iraq has ended. Saddam Hussein has failed to disarm. Today men and women who have volunteered to protect freedom and liberty stand ready to take action against the corrupt and evil regime of Saddam Hussein. America is not eager to go to war, as we have sought peace through diplomacy for 12 years.

Yet Saddam Hussein is not a peaceful man who can be reasoned with. He is a blood-thirsty dictator willing to kill and torture his own people in the pursuit of power. Saddam has aggressively pursued weapons of mass destruction and harbors and supports terrorists. We cannot wait until another September 11 tragedy before we take action to dis-

arm this threat. Thankfully, we have a President in George W. Bush that clearly understands the threat to the American people. As we face possible conflict and as the father of three sons in the military, I want our troops and their families to know that our prayers are with them and that we are ever thankful for their service and patriotism. May God bless our troops.

THE BUDGET'S EFFECT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

(Ms. WOOSLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight how the administration's budget leaves children and families behind. As we begin debating this budget, we must remember that the biggest challenge facing American families is how to bridge work and caring for their children and families at the same time. And, Mr. Speaker, as we stand on the brink of preemptive war, this is especially true for the families of our troops, our National Guard and our Reservists. Whether already deployed or waiting for their orders, these brave men and women and their families are wondering how they will make ends meet as their loved ones fulfill their military duty, how will they juggle their work and family responsibilities while fulfilling their Nation's call.

I urge my colleagues to consider the struggles of military families and ask if this fiscal year 2004 budget proposal invests adequately in the programs that help all families balance their work and family responsibilities.

A DEFINING MOMENT IN HISTORY

(Mrs. MILLER of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, we are at a defining moment in the history of our Nation and of the world. Last night the President of the United States stood up for the security of our Nation, of our allies, and the world. He said that no longer will tyrannical dictators be allowed to flaunt international will and hold the world hostage with weapons of mass destruction and perhaps give those horrible weapons to terrorists who would not hesitate to use them against innocent civilians. The President has gone the extra mile to achieve a diplomatic solution to the crises in Iraq. The President has worked to build a larger international coalition of the willing to finally end Iraq's refusal to disarm. Our coalition is strong. It is prepared for the task at hand, and it will be victorious.

Our Army is not an Army of conquest, but one of liberation; and as the President said last night, the day of liberation for the Iraqi people is close at hand.

I urge my fellow Americans to keep the men and women of our Armed Forces in their thoughts and prayers as they fight to make America and the world safer.

LIBERTY WILL PREVAIL

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last night President George W. Bush spoke with vision and courage and in keeping with the highest ideals of this Nation and its storied history. It is clear that the long nightmare of the Iraqi people is about to come to an end. Diplomacy may have failed, but liberty will prevail.

Saddam Hussein was offered disarmament and peace. He has chosen exile or war.

As our troops labor in encampments across the Middle East, let us, in every form of prayer and petition, labor in prayer on behalf of them, their families, our leaders, and innocent civilians in harm's way in the difficult days that lie ahead.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after 6:00 p.m. today.

CONDEMNING THE PUNISHMENT OF EXECUTION BY STONING AS A GROSS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 26) condemning the punishment of execution by stoning as a gross violation of human rights, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 26

Whereas death by stoning continues to be imposed as a form of punishment in several countries, as documented by the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices of the United States Department of State;

Whereas the brutal sentence of death by stoning is applied to women who have been accused of adultery, some of whom are coerced into prostitution, or even raped;

Whereas execution by stoning is an exceptionally cruel form of punishment that violates internationally accepted standards of human rights, including those set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

Whereas women around the world continue to be disproportionately targeted for dis-

crimatory, inhuman, and cruel punishments by governments who refuse to protect the rights of all their citizens equally;

Whereas in some places stoning has also been invoked as punishment for "blasphemy", thereby suppressing religious freedom and diversity and stifling political dissent;

Whereas, in July 2002, Amnesty International referred to execution by stoning as "a method specifically designed to increase the victim's suffering";

Whereas, in 2002, the European Union, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Australian Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, the President of Mexico, the Congress of the Deputies of Spain, and other world leaders each condemned stoning and called for clemency for individuals sentenced to stoning; and

Whereas, in 2002 there were acquittals or dismissals of sentences to death by stoning; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns the practice of execution by stoning, and calls upon the international community to recognize this practice as a gross violation of human rights;

(2) requests that the President formally communicate this resolution to governments imposing this cruel punishment and urge the suspension of sentences of death by stoning; and

(3) requests that the President direct the Secretary of State to work with the international community toward the repeal of stoning laws and adherence to international standards of human rights.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

□ 1415

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 26.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution condemning the punishment of execution by stoning as a gross violation of human rights. I am a proud cosponsor of this resolution, and I commend the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM) for her work on this issue. As chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, I am pleased that the House is taking this action.

Mr. Speaker, there can be no doubt that stoning is a gross violation of human rights. When someone is put to death by stoning, they are guaranteed a slow, painful, cruel death. Stones are carefully chosen so they are large enough to cause maximum pain, but not so large as to kill the condemned immediately.

Stoning brings out the worst in human nature. It may surprise many that this barbaric practice has entered the 21st century, but it has. Sharia law governs family law in a wide range of countries. It is only applied to criminal offenses in a handful of states.

In Nigeria, 12 of the country's 36 states put Sharia criminal law into effect in recent years, displacing Nigeria's secular laws.

The case of Amina Lawal, a young woman sentenced to death by stoning for adultery, has brought international attention to Sharia-mandated stoning. Her case is pending. We all hope she is spared this brutal treatment.

This resolution rightfully condemns the practice of stoning and calls upon the President and Secretary of State to work with their counterparts toward the repeal of stoning laws and adherence to international standards of human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

First I would like to congratulate my good friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. MCCOLLUM), the principal author of this important resolution, for bringing it to our attention. She is a valued member of our committee, and I want to thank her personally for this important initiative.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad commentary on the 21st century that we have seen the resurgence under Islamic Sharia religious law of the practice of execution by stoning, where an individual is buried up to his or her neck in sand, and witnesses are invited to throw stones until that person is dead, while shouting, "God is great." It is the ultimate oxymoron on the face of this planet that as a human being is buried up to her neck in sand and is pelted with stones, the phrase can be heard "God is great."

The stones in this vile practice are carefully chosen so that they are large enough to cause horrendous pain, but not so large as to kill the condemned individual immediately. Victims of stoning are guaranteed a slow, torture-filled death. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, their children are forced to watch.

This past year, the world was horrified as mothers were tried, convicted and subjected to this horrible death sentence. The fact that these women have been given the recourse to court appeals does not make the punishment any more acceptable. Execution by stoning violates all international standards of human rights and decency.

We must let the world know, Mr. Speaker, that civilized nations and the United States in particular reject with disgust and horror this form of punishment. I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 26.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.